

The Roman satirists incorporate philosophy in diverse ways: Horace places the most overtly philosophical speeches in the mouths of the slaves Damasippus and Davus (*Serm.* II.3 and 7); Persius thanks his teacher Cornutus and asks his readers directly in his satirist's voice whether philosophy has allowed them to live a "straight life" (5.104-5). Juvenal, however, lacks an overt use of philosophy, in the voices of his satirist or his interlocutors. Juvenal's few mentions are so spare that scholars generally credit him with no more than "the general intellectual equipment of the educated rhetorician" (Coffey 1976) or "a technical knowledge of philosophy" (Courtney 1980).

This may well be true. In his 15th satire, however, Juvenal characterizes vice in philosophical terms and categories, albeit in an ironic way. The vice itself is cannibalism that has its roots in *ira*: a fight broke out between two neighboring Egyptian towns on a feast day, and in the escalation of violence, a resident of one of the villages was torn apart and eaten by those of the other. Juvenal frames the philosophical nature of the satire with questions at the beginning and the end: the first echoes Cicero (*Tusc.* 5.78) and the last invokes Pythagoras (15.171-4). Within the satire he offers standard philosophical *topoi*: civilization and convention, the differences between humans and animals. The sum of these philosophically slanted observations, however, doesn't add up.

The philosophical language that Juvenal uses ironically in this satire has little to do with the details or validity of personal philosophy, but rather with the way that philosophy had shaped discussion of morality in education and rhetoric. As Juvenal notes, the whole world has Greek and Roman education (15.110). The obvious counterpoint to this approach to morality was an approach in terms of traditional Roman *mores*, such as Juvenal grants to Umbricius in satire 3, for example. In the 15th satire, Juvenal is at his indignant best against the barbarity of the Egyptians, but his irony is also directed at the philosophical language of morality and philosophical ethics.

Apart from religion and culture, it would seem that philosophy is the only source capable of providing a standard of right and wrong that transcends individual cultural practice. What Juvenal has produced in this satire is a parody of sorts of the kind of pedagogical set-piece or tract that can be found in the works of Musonius, Epictetus, Plutarch, and Dio. At the same time, satire 15 does not present itself as an obvious parody. Part of its irony is its seeming sincerity. Juvenal offers exempla and arguments in an aporetic fashion, that are "self consuming," so that we do not reach a ready conclusion at the end. Juvenal does not deconstruct all moral categories and reach a point of relativism in which he actually approves of the Egyptians and their cannibalism or equates them with Romans. Juvenal tries to make philosophy do what philosophy claims to do, to offer the right way to live. His effort is ironic, and in the end, the philosophical claims of Juvenal's satirist appear no more authoritative than those of traditional Roman morality would have been for Egyptian villagers—or for many Romans.